



## Northeast (NE) Multispecies Information Sheet

### Charter/Party and Recreational Fishing



*This summary provides a broad overview of restrictions and requirements; it is not a substitute for the regulations. You are strongly encouraged to read the regulations in conjunction with this information sheet to fully understand how this fishery is managed. This information sheet will be updated as regulations are revised. The measures described here may be found at 50 CFR § 648.88 and § 648.89.*

#### **Introduction:**

The following measures apply to private recreational fishing vessels in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ, typically 3-200 miles from shore), Federal charter/party permitted vessels, and Federal NE multispecies permitted vessels fishing under the charter/party or recreational regulations (not fishing under a NE multispecies day-at-sea [DAS]). The term NE multispecies refers to the following fishes: American plaice, Atlantic cod, Atlantic halibut, Atlantic wolffish, haddock, ocean pout, offshore hake, pollock, redfish, red hake, silver hake, white hake, windowpane flounder, winter flounder, witch flounder, and yellowtail flounder.

#### **Federal Minimum Fish Sizes and Possession Limits for Recreational and Charter/Party Vessels:**

Species		Total Length (in)	Possession Limit	
Atlantic cod	Inside GOM RMA	21	9 fish per <u>person</u> per day (possession prohibited Sep 1 - Apr 14)	
	Outside GOM RMA	22	Private: 10 fish per person per day	Charter/Party: No limit
haddock	Inside GOM RMA	21	3 fish per <u>person</u> per day (possession prohibited Sep 1 - Oct 31 and Mar 1 - Apr 30)	
	Outside GOM RMA	18	Unlimited	
Atlantic halibut		41	1 fish per <u>vessel</u> per trip	
pollock		19	Unlimited	
witch flounder (gray sole)		14	Unlimited	
yellowtail flounder		13	Unlimited	
American plaice (dab)		14	Unlimited	
winter flounder (blackback)		12	Unlimited	
redfish (ocean perch)		9	Unlimited	
offshore hake, red hake, white hake, and silver hake (whiting)		None	Unlimited	
Atlantic wolffish, windowpane flounder, ocean pout		N/A	NO RETENTION	

\*GOM RMA = Gulf of Maine Regulated Mesh Area, see Figure 1 below.

#### **ALL VESSELS:**

##### **Federal and State Regulations:**

State recreational fishing regulations may differ from the Federal regulations. Please consult with state fisheries agencies to determine possession, season, and gear restrictions under state regulations. When Federal and state regulations both apply, vessels are bound by the most restrictive requirements.

##### **Possession restrictions:**

- Fillets, or parts of fish, must have at least 2 square inches of contiguous skin that allows for identification of fish species, while possessed on board and at the time of landing.

- Vessels may possess fillets less than the minimum size specified if the fillets are taken from legal-sized fish and are not offered or intended for sale, trade or barter.
- For purposes of counting fish, fillets will be converted to whole fish at the place of landing by dividing the number of fillets by two. If fish are filleted into a single (butterfly) fillet, such fillet shall be deemed to be from one whole fish.
- Cod harvested by recreational and charter/party vessels with more than one person aboard may be pooled in one or more containers. Compliance with the possession limit will be determined by dividing the number of fish on board by the number of persons aboard. If there is a violation of the possession limit on board a vessel carrying more than one person, the violation shall be deemed to have been committed by the owner and operator.

- **Recreational and charter/party vessels may not fish for, possess, or land any cod from the GOM RMA from September 1 through April 14. These same vessels may not fish for, possess, or land any haddock from the GOM RMA from September 1 through November 30, and March 1 through April 30.** (Cod or haddock caught outside of the GOM RMA during these periods may be on board a vessel transiting the area, but only if all bait and hooks are removed from fishing rods and all cod on board have been gutted and stored.)
- Cod must be stored so as to be readily available for inspection.
- Any trip covering 2 calendar days, and over 15 hours in duration, may possess 2 daily possession limits worth of cod. Likewise, any trip covering 3 calendar days, and over 39 hours in duration, may possess 3 times the daily limit of cod, and so on.

#### **Annual Catch Limits**

For two groundfish stocks (GOM cod and GOM haddock) a portion of the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) is set aside for recreational fishing. If this portion of the ACL for either of these two stocks is exceeded, NMFS, in consultation with the New England Fishery Management Council, will develop management measures during the following fishing year to compensate for the overage. ➤

#### **Gear Restrictions:**

Each angler is limited to one line. There is no limit to the number of hooks per line per person. All other fishing gear must be properly stowed as described in the regulations.

#### **Restrictions on Sale:**

It is unlawful to sell, barter, trade, or otherwise transfer for a commercial purpose, or to attempt to sell, barter, trade, or otherwise transfer for a commercial purpose, NE multispecies caught or landed by recreational fishing vessels fishing in the EEZ, or charter/party vessels not fishing under a DAS.

#### **CHARTER/PARTY VESSELS:**

##### **Permit Requirements:**

Charter/party vessels without a limited access NE multispecies permit that fish for or possess NE multispecies in the EEZ must obtain an open access NE multispecies charter/party permit. Vessels with a limited access NE multispecies permit do not need to obtain a charter/party permit. Such vessels, when fishing under the charter/party rules, must stow all fishing gear except rod & reel or handline gear unless further restricted by a closed area letter of authorization (LOA) described below, and must abide by the restrictions on sale described above. Additionally, all vessels fishing as a charter/party vessel must also submit vessel trip reports.

##### **Reporting Requirements**

All NE multispecies charter/party vessels are required to submit a vessel trip report (VTR) to the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office for each trip that is taken. In addition, all NE multispecies vessels must submit a minimum of one trip report per week. If a vessel does not fish during a week, a "Did Not Fish" report must be

submitted. "Did Not Fish" reports can also be submitted online via Fish-on-Line.

<https://www.nero.noaa.gov/NMFSlogin/>

#### **Charter/Party Vessel Letter of Acknowledgement (LOA) to Fish in Closed Areas:**

Vessels fishing under charter/party regulations may not fish in the GOM Rolling Closure Areas, Cashes Ledge Closed Area, Western GOM Closed Area, or the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area, unless the vessel has on board the appropriate LOA issued by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office. The restrictions associated with the LOAs are in effect for a minimum of 7 days for the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area; 90 days for the GOM Rolling Closure Areas; and for the remainder of the fishing year for the Western GOM and Cashes Ledge Closed Areas. LOAs are available upon request by calling the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office at (978) 281-9370. Additional details on closed areas are available in a separate information sheet.

As a condition of these letters, the vessel owner must agree to the following restrictions:

- Fish managed by either the New England Fishery Management Council or the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council that are harvested or possessed by the vessel may not be sold, bartered or traded or intended for sale, barter or trade, regardless of where caught. Species such as tuna and striped bass may be landed for sale provided the vessel has the proper permits;
- The vessel has no gear other than rod and reel or handline gear on board;
- The LOA must be carried on board the vessel during the participation period;
- Vessels that have Western GOM or Cashes Ledge Closed Areas LOA onboard the vessel may not use any NE multispecies DAS during the participation period; and
- Vessels with a Nantucket Lightship Closed Area LOA onboard the vessel, may not fish outside of the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area during the period specified by the LOA.

#### **Prohibition on Fishing Under a DAS While Taking Passengers for Hire:**

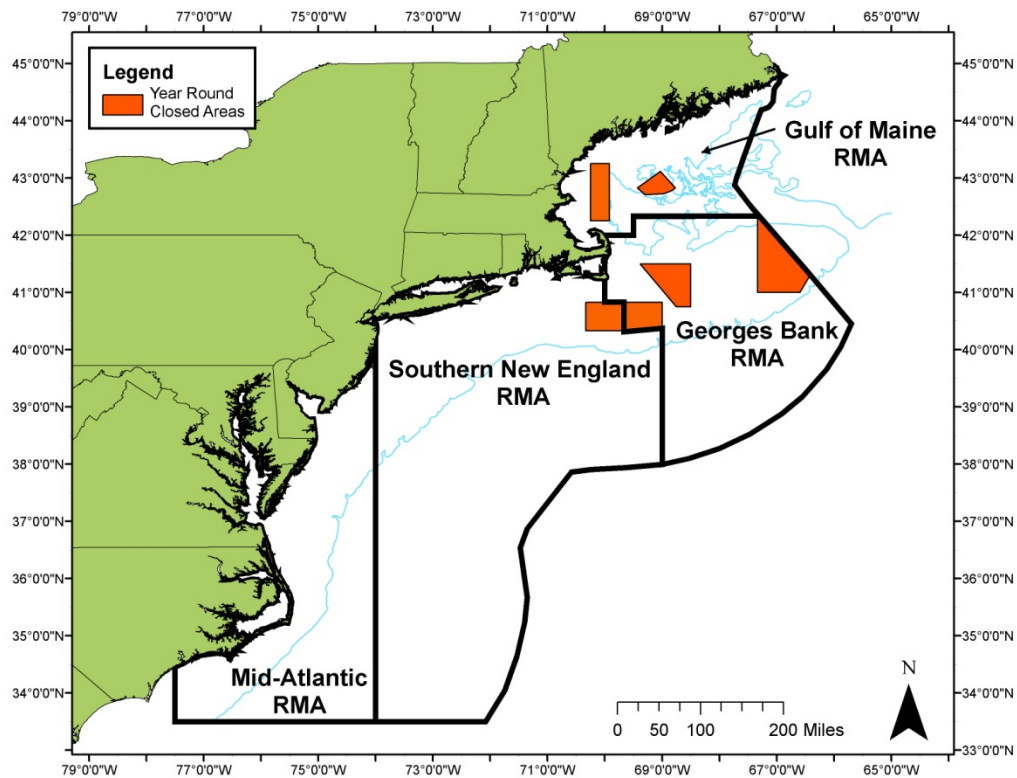
Charter/party vessels with a limited access NE multispecies permit are prohibited from fishing under a NE multispecies DAS when carrying passengers for hire.

This provision is intended to more clearly distinguish between vessels carrying passengers for hire and other commercial fishing vessels.

#### **Control Date:**

Charter/party vessel owners should be aware that a control date of March 30, 2006, has been published for the NE multispecies charter/party fishery. This date may be used for establishing eligibility criteria for determining future access to the charter/party fishery. A control date is established in part to discourage speculative entry into the fishery while the New England Fishery Management Council considers whether and how access to the charter/party fishery should be controlled.

**FIGURE 1 Regulated Mesh Areas (RMA)**



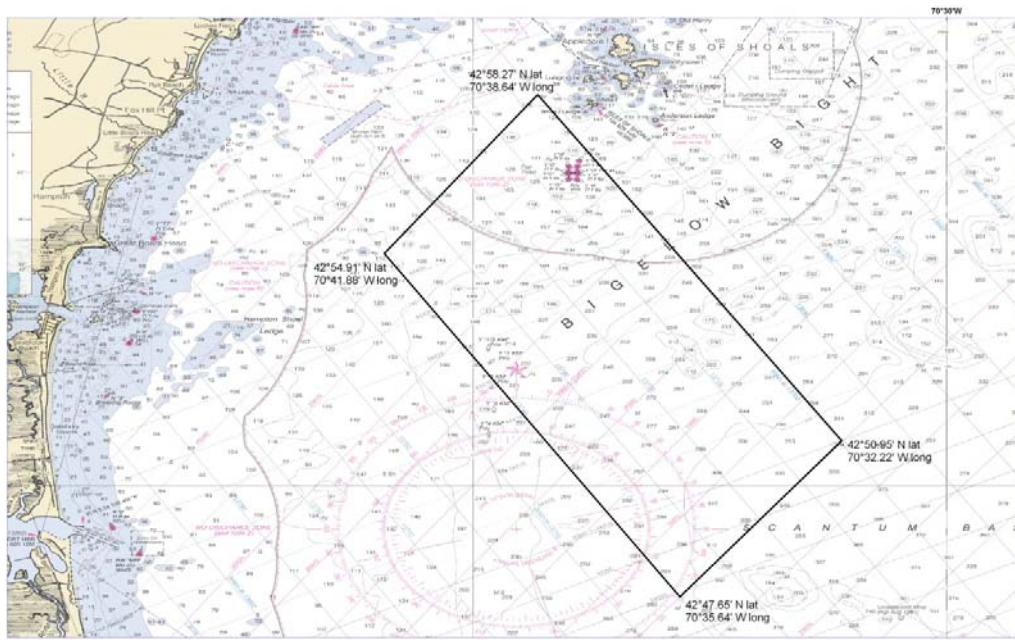
Bounded on the east and south by a line connecting the following points:

Point	N. Latitude	W. Longitude
G1	(1)	(1)
G2	43° 58'	67° 22'
G3	42° 53.1'	67° 44.4'
G4	42° 31'	67° 28.1'
CII3	42° 22'	67° 20'
G6	42° 20'	67° 20'
G7	42° 20'	69° 30'
G8	42° 00'	69° 30'
G9	42° 00'	(2)

1The intersection of the shoreline and the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary.

2The intersection of the Cape Cod, MA, coastline and 42°00' N. lat.

## Gulf of Maine (GOM) Cod Spawning Protection Area (Whaleback Area)



**Gear Restrictions:** The following gear restrictions apply to recreational fishing vessels fishing in the GOM Cod Spawning Protection Area.

- **Recreational vessels:** From April 1 through June 30 of each year, all recreational vessels, including private recreational and charter/party vessels, may only use pelagic hook-and-line gear, as defined below, when fishing in the GOM Cod Spawning Protection Area.
  - Pelagic hook-and-line gear is defined as handline or rod and reel gear that is designed to fish for, or that is being used to fish for, pelagic species. No portion of this gear may be operated in contact with the bottom at any time.

Point	N. Latitude	W. Longitude
CSPA1	42° 50.95'	70° 32.22'
CSPA2	42° 47.65'	70° 35.64'
CSPA3	42° 54.91'	70° 41.88'
CSPA4	42° 58.27'	70° 38.64'

**Possession Restrictions:** Any vessel fishing in the GOM Cod Spawning Protection Area and using pelagic hook-and-line gear is prohibited from possessing or retaining regulated species or ocean pout from April 1 through June 30 of each year.

**Transiting:** Recreational vessels are allowed to transit the GOM Cod Spawning Protection Area, provided all gear is stowed according to existing regulations.